

HELI HILTUNEN

Thank God, I'm Beginning to Be Delivered of My Melancholy

29 October – 22 November 2020

galerie anhava

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Heli Hiltunen's (b. 1960) works create pathways between the present and the past. They provide clues to the audience by forming routes in a kind of map, and by offering perspectives for a closer look. The truth that emerges from one route is not unconditional; rather, you can disagree and engage in dialogue with it. The name of the exhibition, *Thank God, I'm Beginning to Be Delivered of My Melancholy*, is a quote from the play *Leonce and Lena* by playwright Georg Büchner from 1836.

The most thematically unified series in the exhibition comprises 17 works with floral motifs. The works have been printed from slides, which in the early days of slide projectors were captivatingly called *Magic Lantern slides*. In Heli Hiltunen's works, everyday phrases are screen-printed inside a frame, where they are joined with floral motifs replete with dreams. The materials used by Hiltunen include shopping lists, letters, and photographs, for example, and the way she employs them forms an essential part of the content of her works. The found materials remind you of time, which keeps going at its own pace. The fragments and words that are left behind are rearranged: in the hands of others, in a new life. Words may become lost over the years, they may be forgotten, or they may be organised into new layers.

Using trees and wood as materials remains a common theme throughout the exhibited works. In Hiltunen's oil paintings, you can see branches, pathways which could have been formed by pests living in the tree. It is also possible to use trees to measure time. As the tree grows, its delicate frame is transformed into a thick trunk. Hiltunen's collage *Tiedon portaat* ('The Steps of Knowledge') portrays a Finnish type-planned veteran's house, which is also made of wood. The house was once full of life, but now it has turned into a forlorn scene. All that remains is a ladder, a shovel, and a bucket. Hiltunen has made the collage into her own personal archive. The veranda rail is covered in payslips. Underneath the glass, there are documents casting light on people's lives and their fates. There is also an uplifting drawing, where flowers reach up to the birds flying in the sky.

Balls coiled from old rug weft allude to everyday chores in the pair of photographs *The Northern and Southern Hemisphere*. Although the balls are black, tightly-wound knots, they are marked with white spots that make them shine in the dark. Could it be that the spots form star charts?

Hiltunen's works investigate people's micro-histories and examine what will be left of us after we are gone. The remaining material also inspires you to think about what you ultimately knew of those who are no longer with us. Their handwriting and spelling can reveal something about the time in which they lived, but maybe also something about their fate and social standing. Even if the words were written by someone close to you, they may, in all their familiarity, seem peculiarly strange in retrospect (when the person has passed on). Hiltunen's works are very discreet, and while people are present in them, they never show their faces. The trees continue to grow by the house. The branches become thicker, and the scenery changes. The house has a new owner, but the temporal layers live on.

Heli Hiltunen (b. 1960) graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in 1990. She has since organised several solo exhibitions and participated in group exhibitions both in Finland and abroad. Her works are included in several Finnish and Nordic collections, such as the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, the Helsinki Art Museum (HAM), Saastamoinen Foundation's Art Collection, the Wihuri Art Collection, the Niemistö Collection, and Sara Hildén Art Museum. Heli Hiltunen received the Ars Fennica Award in 2001.

ANHAVA UNDERGROUND:

JUHANA MOISANDER

Pied Piper

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Pied Piper is the final part of Juhana Moisander's (b.1977) *Ethology of a Man*, a trilogy examining human behaviour. The main character of the work is a man immersed in playing music, who gestures the viewer to stay still and try to analyse his internal world. The loneliness exuding from the character is somewhat dispiriting, but it is also impressive.

The name of the work alludes to a German folktale. However, while the Pied Piper of Hamelin was clad in cheerful-looking clothes with vibrant colours, the Pied Piper in Moisander's work is dressed in a rather formal grey suit.

The Pied Piper's instruments, a recorder, which grows out of his nose, and a lute, point back to the Baroque period. The music for the work has been modified from Baroque composer Sylvius Leopold Weiss's chaconne. Weiss achieved particular fame as a highly skilled lute player. In his work, Moisander has stripped the exuberance and grandeur characteristic of the Baroque period to a minimum, but the dramatic undercurrents can still be felt.

The character expresses his emotions by playing the lute and the recorder, which is attached to his face in place of his nose. However, this recorder-nose does not grow in length like Pinocchio's did. The musician in *Pied Piper* seems to be in control of the situation in which he finds himself. The subdued form and downward-cast eyes indicate remorse. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, the character starts to move backwards, the music becomes distorted, and his hands rise up. What will happen next? The Pied Piper has become trapped in a cycle of self-deception. The present-day Pied Piper continues to embody two opposing traits: a helpful inclination coupled with a deceitful personality. Indeed, the modern times have not progressed far from the days of the Hamelin folktale.

Juhana Moisander lives and works in Karkkila. He completed his Master of Arts degree at the University of Art and Design Helsinki in 2007. Moisander's works have been presented in several domestic and international exhibitions. The first two parts of the *Ethology of a Man* series were presented at the Espoo Museum of Modern Art (EMMA), and the Mänttä Art Festival in 2019. Moisander's works are included in several collections, such as the Helsinki City Art Museum's (HAM) collection, the collection of the Espoo Museum of Modern Art (EMMA), and Jenni and Antti Wihuri Foundation Collection. In the spring of 2020, Moisander completed a public work, *Justitia*, commissioned by the State Art Commission, for the new courthouse in Lappeenranta.

– Ulla-Maija Pitkänen